

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please amend the Paragraph beginning on Page 6, line 19, as follows:

The head end 10b, as shown in Fig. 2, includes a buckle 20 that receives and locks the tail end 10a to form the band in an encircling position about the stomach. The buckle 20 has an aperture, or opening, that allows a part of the tail end 10a to be drawn through the buckle 20. The buckle 20 includes a notch 22 for receiving the tooth 14 of the tail end 10a. The head end 10b further comprises a release tab 24. Another aspect of the head end 10b is the indicator window 36, which allows the surgeon or other medical professional to view the indicator 38 portion of the tail end 10a, preferably enhanced by a contrasting color or texture, when inserted into the head end 10b to provide positive visual and/or tactile indication that the gastric band had been releasably locked in position.

Please amend the Paragraph beginning on Page 7, line 4, as follows:

In practice, the gastric band is implanted around the stomach of the patient using now-standard laparoscopic or laparotomic procedures well known by those of skill in the gastric banding art. Once the gastric band 12 encircles the stomach and is positioned in the desired location along the length of the stomach, the tail end 10a is inserted into the buckle 20 of the head end 10b. A closure tool, such as that described in U.S. Pat. No. 5,658,298 to Vincent and Coe, the disclosure of which is incorporated herein by reference, may be used to secure the tail and head ends, 10a and 10b respectively, together. For example, the tail end 10a is drawn through the buckle 20 until the tooth 14 and the notch 22 engage or interlock and prevent the gastric band 12 from opening. When the two ends of the gastric band are properly locked together, the indicator 38 on the tail end 10a is visible through window 36 on the head end 10b.

The buckle 20 of the head end 10b encircles, or surrounds, the tail end 10a. The part of the tail end 10a that is drawn through and exits the buckle 20 may be identified as a first part of the tail end 10a, and the part of the tail end 10a remaining within the buckle 20 when the gastric band 12 is releasably secured may be identified as a second part of the tail end 10a.